

## Swearing In Remarks

John Gordon

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Mr. Secretary, thank you for your very kind remarks.

And, along with Secretary Richardson, I extend a very warm welcome to all those who could join with us today for this rather, at least for me, important occasion.

There are so many friends and well-wishers here that I cannot thank and recognize each one personally, but I am compelled to offer particular thanks to the members of Congress and dedicated professional staff who have joined with us today. You have been the driving force behind the establishment of the National Nuclear Security Administration. I thank you for your support of this important organization and I thank you for the support you have given me.

Mr. Secretary, I have a number of friends who wonder why I would ever consider such a job. They seem to think the problems too vexing, the bureaucracy too cumbersome, and the political and public support too weak for a mission that is both declining and too demanding of resources that could be put to other national priorities.

George Tenet was particularly supportive. He said something along the lines of "Well, if that's what you really want to do I guess its alright with me."

Another friend, Buzzy Krongard, likened this to being fast-rope onto the deck of the Titanic, after it hit the iceberg.

I probably shouldn't even repeat what Marilyn said when I began to discuss with her if I would take on another government job.

There is reason for skepticism about the probability of success. There certainly is no shortage of problems and issues to attack. But I cannot accept the premise that there is little chance of success or that the mission is not important or not worth our best efforts. There is support for the mission. It couldn't be any stronger from the Congress. It couldn't be any stronger from

within NNSA where there is a very clear realization that the individual organizations and leaders must put aside differences and move forward toward common solutions as a team, as an enterprise.

I am an unabashed advocate of this new organization. I started out my professional career in this business and have long associated with each of the elements of what is now NNSA. I have considerable affection for the people who make up the organization - I have worked closely with many over the years - and I have a great appreciation for their dedication, their accomplishments, their vital contributions to national security, and their professionalism. I am very proud to now be able to lead and work with them as we reinvigorate the nuclear enterprise of this country.

This is a great job. Although retired from the Air Force, I will continue to play a significant role in national security. I get to work with superb people. I have no small degree of influence over the best science laboratories in the country. I have no small degree of influence over production facilities that were the mainstay of our capabilities during the cold war and are key to the future of our nuclear deterrent. I have a major role in stemming a host of proliferation concerns and working with Russia to increase both weapon and reactor safety and security. I even get to stay close to the Navy through the program that operates half of the reactors in this country - with safety, and professionalism, and management skills that may be unmatched anywhere. This is a great job.

That said, I know it will not be easy to do all that the Secretary and the Congress expect. The type and magnitude of changes that we need will require time, support and lots of hard work. Mr. Secretary, that's what I offer and pledge to you today - lots of hard work, and lots of energy to keep America's nuclear enterprise second to none - in our weapons work, in non-proliferation and in naval reactors.

This is an important day, not because of my swearing in -- although this is great fun -- but because it signifies to all the members of the National Nuclear Security Administration that this nation, this Administration, this Congress understands the importance of their mission, values their work, supports them, and appreciates them. There are some 40,000 of us - feds and contractors, in Washington and in the field - who work hard every day to strengthen our security. I'm delighted to be one of them again.